

Message Text

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S/S-O:JETHYDEN

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS IMMEDIATE

INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY CAIRO PRIORITY

AMCONSUL JERUSALEM PRIORITY

S E C R E T STATE 063427

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MARR, XF, IS, LE

SUBJECT: SOUTHERN LEBANON

1. DURING COURSE OF MEETING WITH DEFENSE MINISTER WEIZMAN ON MARCH 9, SECRETARY RAISED SUBJECT OF SOUTHERN LEBANON. HE NOTED THAT WE WERE WORRIED ABOUT DEVELOPMENTS THERE. WEIZMAN NOTED THAT ISRAEL WAS QUITE CONCERNED ABOUT THE SITUATION. HE POINTED OUT THAT SAIQA UNITS WERE LOCATED NEAR THE ISRAELI BORDER IN SEVERAL PLACES. WEIZMAN EMPHASIZED THAT IT WAS NOT SO MUCH A QUESTION OF NUMBERS AS LOCATION.

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2. IN COMMENTING ON RECENT BATTLE AT MARUN AR-RA'S, WEIZMAN NOTED THAT THE CHRISTIANS UNFORTUNATELY HAD "MIS-BEHAVED" AND LOST. HE SAID THAT IN THIS VENTURE THE CHRISTIANS DID NOT HAVE THE ENCOURAGEMENT OR SUPPORT OF THE ISRAELIS AND PERHAPS THIS BLOODY NOSE WILL TEACH THEM A LESSON. HE NOTED THAT HE HAD TO RESIST HEAVY PRESSURE FROM THE ISRAELI MILITARY TO GO TO THE ASSISTANCE OF THE

CHRISTIANS.

3. WEIZMAN EXPRESSED THE HOPE THAT THE SYRIANS WOULD NOT TRY TO CAUSE TROUBLE IN SOUTHERN LEBANON AS A MEANS OF BLOWING UP THE EGYPTIAN NEGOTIATIONS. IN THIS RESPECT, HE ASSURED THE SECRETARY THAT ISRAEL IS NOT GOING TO INITIATE ANY MILITARY ACTION. HE SAID THAT AS LONG AS THERE ARE NO PROVOCATIONS FROM THE PALESTINIANS, ISRAEL WILL HOLD ITS FIRE. HE NOTED THE ISRAELI CONCERN ABOUT ARTILLERY MOVING SOUTH WHICH WAS BEING USED AGAINST CHRISTIAN ENCLAVES. HE HOPED SITUATION DID NOT DEVELOP WHERE THIS ARTILLERY WOULD POSE SERIOUS THREAT TO CHRISTIANS OR ISRAELIS MIGHT HAVE TO RESPOND. HE ALSO HOPED THAT THERE WERE NO ROCKETS LAUNCHED INTO ISRAEL.

4. AS CONCERNS ISRAELI REACTION, WEIZMAN TOOK INITIATIVE TO REFER TO IDF BOMBING OF AL-IZZIYAH AND SAID THAT SUCH A REACTION WAS NOT THE INTENT OF THE GOI, SUGGESTING THAT THINGS GOT OUT OF HAND.

5. WEIZMAN CONCLUDED BY SAYING THAT ISRAEL WOULD DO ITS BEST TO KEEP THE LID ON THE SOUTH. HE ASKED THAT WE DISCUSS SITUATION WITH SYRIANS IN EFFORT TO ENCOURAGE THEM TO RESTRAIN THE PALESTINIANS. THE SECRETARY NOTED THAT SINCE THE SADAT INITIATIVE, THE SYRIANS HAVE RELAXED THEIR HOLD ON THE FATAH IN THE SOUTH BUT, CLEARLY, ASSAD DOES

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NOT WANT A BLOWUP IN THAT AREA.

6. IN CONTEXT OF EXPRESSING ISRAEL'S CONCERN ABOUT DEVELOPMENTS IN BEIRUT, WEIZMAN NOTED THAT HADDAD AND SHIDIAQ HAD ASKED ISRAEL TO SUPPORT THEM IF THEY DECLARED SOUTH LEBANON AN INDEPENDENT COUNTRY. WEIZMAN SAID ISRAEL HAD REFUSED. VANCE

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